

Recently, I saw this strength in a young Air Force Staff Sergeant named Scott Lilley. Scott was serving in Iraq when an IED left him with a severe brain injury. I think it was last Fourth of July that you came to the White House. Yes, I was one who felt like this guy had no chance. And yet, he—the doctors here used state-of-the-art technology and aggressive treatment to get Scott better. Their perseverance paid off, and so has his. I welcomed he and his mom and dad to the Oval Office the other day. He was more eloquent than I was, which isn't all that hard. [Laughter] He drives a car; he goes to baseball games; he loves to joke.

His doctor calls Scott's recovery miraculous. And thanks to the extraordinary care he received at Bethesda as well his own extraordinary resolve, he is now back on active duty in the Air Force. And we are glad you're here.

The greatest privilege of serving as President is to be the Commander in Chief of such an extraordinary group of men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. And I'm pleased to help start construction on the new hospital that will continue to provide the excellent care our troops deserve. It is fitting that this new facility be built in a place called Bethesda, which draws its name from the Biblical pool of healing. It is there that a lame man was made to walk and was dispatched with the words: "Behold, thou art made whole."

I pray that this will be the site of many miracles of healing, where the lame will walk again, where broken bodies will be made whole, and where you'll always know that you're in our prayers and in the hearts of the American people.

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. at the National Naval Medical Center. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Chris Van Hollen and Lt. Gov. Anthony G. Brown of Maryland; Capt. Lorenzo York, USN, command chaplain, National Naval Medical Center; and former Senator Bob Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Cochairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors.

Remarks on Departure From the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda

July 3, 2008

Rescue of Hostages in Colombia

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to speak to President Uribe of Colombia. And he called to give me the good news that hostages had been rescued, including three Americans that had been held since 2003. I congratulated the President. I asked him to congratulate his military and those who had planned it. And I told him what a joyous occasion it must be to know that the plan had worked, that people who were unjustly held are now free to be with their families.

And so I'm proud of our relationship with Colombia, and I'm proud of my friend President Uribe. And I appreciate his courage and his strong leadership and the successful operations they waged.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:56 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Marc Gonsalves, Thomas Howes, and Keith Stansell, former hostages held by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC).

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

June 28

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared an emergency in California and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area struck by wildfires beginning June 20 and continuing.

June 29

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.